



SENATOR

Mary Margaret Haugen

E-Newsletter - 10th District

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10th Legislative District

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2009 LEGISLATURE — WEEK ELEVEN

I returned to Olympia for the 11th week of the 2009 session after holding a pair of very successful town hall meetings in Stanwood and Coupeville over the weekend.



Dozens of community members joined me at Stanwood Middle School on Saturday morning to discuss the state budget outlook and what a decrease in revenues might mean for programs that provide valuable services to some of our most vulnerable citizens, and many members of the audience shared their ideas and priorities with me.

In Coupeville, where we had a crowd of over 140 people, we discussed the budget situation as well — but the big news was my early announcement that the state was going to be building new ferries to serve the Keystone-Port Townsend run. I also confirmed that there would be no reservations on the Mukilteo/Clinton run until the ferry system could prove to me and to the people of South

Whidbey that a reservation system was something that would work for the residents.

Meetings like these are one of the most important things I do, and provide me with valuable information and feedback from the people I represent.

If you couldn't attend, please check out a [brief video](#) showing what the meetings were like. You can also view newspaper coverage of the meetings by clicking on the following links:

[Whidbey News Times](#)

[Whidbey Examiner](#)

[South Whidbey Record](#)

[Stanwood Camano News](#)

WASHINGTON'S TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

On Wednesday we released the Senate's proposed 2009-11 transportation budget that focuses on projects that enhance the safety and efficiency of our state highway system and includes directives that improve accountability within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington State Ferries (WSF).

Transportation in our state is funded mostly through fuel taxes, and we're starting to see a serious shortfall of revenue because cars are getting more fuel efficient and people are driving less.

Fortunately, we're currently on track to begin work on \$4.1 billion in highway construction and preservation projects during the next two years, and these are coming on line at just the right time. With our economy hurting, we'll be starting work on more than 400 transportation projects that will provide jobs as well as highway improvements.

At the local level, it means we're going to see the construction of four 64-car, Island Home class ferries over the next four years — work that will keep our shipyards busy and give us new vessels on the Keystone-Port Townsend run.

And we'll also see paving work, widening and interchange improvements on Highway 20 and other roads all over our region.

You can see the full video of the Senate Transportation Committee 2009-11 budget rollout [here](#).

AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS

On Tuesday — the 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill — the governor signed into law a [bill](#) sponsored by my colleague Sen. Kevin Ranker from San Juan Island to find a permanent funding source for the Neah Bay Response Tug.

The Neah Bay Response Tug, stationed at the western entrance of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, is our first line of defense against a catastrophic oil spill that would have dramatic, long-term impacts to our marine and coastal environments. It would also have a devastating effect on our economy by interrupting shipping to a region highly dependent on maritime trade.

Tug operations have been funded by taxpayers since 1999 — but with taxpayers increasingly strapped and state revenues down, it's time for a new solution.

This legislation will form a strong coalition of stakeholders and industry representatives to place the cost on those who create the risk by creating a cooperative among shipping companies to cover the cost of operating the Neah Bay Response — saving taxpayers more than \$3.6 million annually.



SPECIAL VISITORS

Former 10th District State Representative Sue Karahalios came down to Olympia to offer testimony in the house on [Senate Bill 5461](#), which eases reporting requirements for small condominium complexes — and she brought some extraordinary students from Oak Harbor High School along with her to see the legislative process first hand!

Jacob Crouch is a top student who is planning on majoring in the biological sciences and has a keen awareness and understanding of government. His father, Mr. Jim Crouch, is a tremendous government teacher at Oak Harbor High School. He works with his students to have local elected officials to speak at his class, and I am pleased to present to his class every year.

Natasha Hilliard, who is the Secretary of the Senior Class, was just honored as the Youth of the Year for the Oak Harbor Boys and Girls Club. She is looking to continue her work with mentoring youth as she goes to college.

And Jordan Kingma is one of four students graduating with a 4.0 GPA from Oak Harbor High School this year. Jordan is President of the Choral Program and Vice-President of the local National Honor Society — he has received a scholarship to attend Whitworth College and will have the unusual honor of being a freshman member of their Touring Choir. Jordan is also a talented artist whose pottery has been chosen as part of the National High School Arts Competition.



Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen with artist John Ebner. 2006/12/14/045 MARGARET HAUGEN

ANOTHER LOCAL ARTIST ON DISPLAY IN OLYMPIA

I was very pleased to host Camano Island artist John Ebner and his wife Paula when they came to Olympia Monday to showcase his work in my office.

John has been painting since 1973, when his wife Paula signed him up for a watercolor course as a start of a new hobby.

For the past 35 years he has painted and studied the area, and his work reflects the essence of the Pacific Northwest — it

really captures the spirit of our area, and I'm honored to have his work in my office.

A FAMILY TRADITION

This week another local resident served as a page for the Senate. Leah Cook is a 15 year old 10th grader from South Whidbey High School. She enjoys snowskiing, boating and fishing. She is also an outstanding contributor to her community, serving as the South Whidbey representative to the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference with the Kiwanis, and works as an intern at Whidbey General Hospital.

Leah is a wonderful young woman, and I was so pleased to have both Leah this year, and her sister Rachel in 2007.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

My executive assistant Nova Gattman, legislative assistant Gina Bull and intern Beau Perschbacher are available to provide constituent services to the people of our community, so please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns — whether they involve bills before the Legislature or topics you feel are being overlooked.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618**. If you have a concern, I want to hear it.

In the meantime, please visit my [web page](#) for up-to-date info on what's happening at the Legislature. I post regular updates — including video — onto my blog, and it's far more information than we'd want to put in a weekly update like this.

Until next week — Take Care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

Washington Senate Democratic Caucus